

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS
4 June 1986

FILE ONLY

7:00 P.M.

Resolution of Spy Cases

TOM BROKAW: It's been a busy days for American spy cases. Jonathan Pollard pleaded guilty to selling American secrets to Israel. And the case of Ronald Pelton, accused of selling secrets to the Russians, is before a jury tonight.

As NBC's Carl Stern reports now, the Pollard case involved his wife and several Israelis.

CARL STERN: Pollard came to plead guilty to espionage in exchange for the government's promise to recommend a prison term of less than life. In the courtroom he was joined by his wife, who agreed to admit hiding documents, for which the penalty could not exceed 10 years in prison.

But the big story was the evidence presented to the judge that at least a half-dozen Israelis took part in the spying and might still be indicted. The evidence show that Pollard, who worked at this naval station as a civilian analyst, hauled out suitcases of classified documents as often as three times a week and delivered them to Israeli Embassy officials, including a graduate student, a science counselor, and a secretary, all working as intelligence agents. Court documents said several people took part in photocopying the documents at the home of an Israeli diplomat in Maryland. The lists show the documents dealt with weapons other countries might use to harm Israel.

Pollard admitted he got \$45,000 in cash plus the first installment on a \$300,000 bank account and a diamond and

sapphire ring.

Both Pollards will be sentenced later. Only Mrs. Pollard remains free.

The federal prosecutor said emphatically that diplomatic concerns about relations with Israel had not led to any curtailment in the investigation and that others could still be charged.

JOSEPH DIGENOVA: The investigation is continuing. And when an investigation continues, that means that there may be other indictments.

STERN: In Israel, which has called the espionage unauthorized, a government official today called it a mistake and a blunder.

EHUD HELMUT: I think it was a mistake. I think there was a temptation because probably because there was a very good source of information which wanted to provide some very interesting things which were out of reach for us, and someone thought that this is the way to do it.

I think he made a major blunder.

STERN: Pollard has promised to continue giving evidence to the prosecutors, and it is very likely that some Israelis will be indicted. Though Israel might be reluctant to send them to the U.S. to be prosecuted, they would never be able to enter the United States again.

BROKAW: When the trial of Ronald Pelton wound up in Baltimore today, the prosecutor didn't soft-pedal his description of Pelton's conduct. As James Polk reports now, the jury heard an emotional blunt account of Pelton's dealing with the Soviet Union.

Continued

2

5 JAMES POLK: The prosecution called Ronald Pelton a spy who broke his oath and betrayed his country, a man who sold the most sensitive secrets of the National Security Agency for \$35,000.

The tapes of Pelton's phone calls to the Russian Embassy in 1980 were replayed for the jury.

[Clip of conversation]

POLK: The defense argued the FBI deceived Pelton and didn't warn him of his right to silence, that there was no evidence without Pelton's own admissions.

The prosecutor called that a smokescreen, the most outrageous insult to common sense any jury has ever been asked to swallow. The prosecutor said Pelton admitted meeting with this KGB agent in Vienna for hours and days at a time. He said the Russians asked him to come once, they asked him to come back, and he was paid cash on the barrel head. The prosecutor told the jury not to let that spy walk away from you and thumb his nose at this.

The details of what Pelton is said to have sold the Russians were kept from the jury for national security reasons. But one former top intelligence official familiar with the case says it would be difficult to overestimate the damage Pelton has done to this country.

The jury was still deliberating this evening.